



PRRC emerging trends

Published by the Princeton Religion Research Center

Vol. 2, No. 7

EVANGELICALS AND THE '80 ELECTION

Princeton, N.J. — One of the unique aspects of the 1980 presidential race is the fact that all three of the leading contenders — President Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and John Anderson — consider themselves “born again” evangelical Christians.

On balance, being identified as an evangelical is more a political asset than a liability. A large majority of non-evangelicals (78 percent) indicate that their preference is not influenced by whether a presidential candidate is an evangelical or else have no opinion on the issue. And those preferring an evangelical are equal in number to those who say they are *less* likely to vote for such a candidate (11 percent in each case).

In contrast, the views of the nation's evangelicals are decidedly pro-evangelical, with 55 percent saying they would be more likely to vote for a candidate with evangelical beliefs, only two percent against. A total of 43 percent say it would make no difference or have no opinion.

Nationally, roughly twice as many (19 percent) say they would be more likely to vote for an evangelical presidential nominee as say they would be less likely to vote for him (nine percent).

CARTER IS FAVORITE

Although the presidential race is currently neck-and-neck between President Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, Carter is clearly the favorite among the fifth of the electorate who can be described as evangelicals, a group whose vote could be decisive in a close election.

In a trial heat among the three leading presidential candidates, Carter receives the support of 52 percent of evangelicals who are registered to vote to 31 percent

for Reagan and six percent for John Anderson, the Independent.

In contrast, among the non-evangelical segment of the population, Carter and Reagan are in close contention. The GOP challenger receives 39 percent of the vote to 36 for Carter and 15 percent for Anderson.

Further evidence of the pro-Carter leanings of evangelicals is seen in their rating of the President's performance in office. Among evangelicals 46 percent approve while 29 percent of non-evangelicals do so.

PROFILE OF EVANGELICALS

A “profile” of evangelicals shows that certain groups are overrepresented in their ranks: women, non-whites, persons with less than a college education, Southerners, older people, Protestants, rural residents, and the less well-to-do.

Despite the fact that evangelicals tend to a greater degree than non-evangelicals to be found in population groups which have a poor record of voter participation, the percentages of evangelicals currently registered to vote, and who indicate a likelihood of voting, closely parallel the percentages recorded for non-evangelicals.

Evangelicals tend to be politically more Democratic than non-evangelicals, and at the same time, more conservative ideologically. Namely six in 10 (57 percent) of evangelicals, for example, describe themselves as Democrats compared to 57 percent for non-evangelicals. And in response to the question of which party they would like to see win in their congressional district, 63% of evangelicals say the Democrats as compared to 56% of non-evangelicals.

Evangelicals lean slightly *more* to the right or conservative point of view than do non-evangelicals although not to the

degree sometimes thought. For example, 37% of evangelicals describe themselves as right-of-center compared to 29% for non-evangelicals.

FEW AWARE REAGAN, ANDERSON ARE ‘BORN AGAIN’

In addition to the Democratic leaning of evangelicals, also helping to boost Carter's standing is the fact that many more voters (51 percent) are aware that the President considers himself a born again Christian than know that Reagan and Anderson also place themselves in the evangelical wing of Christianity. Only 14 percent and 11 percent, respectively, know that Reagan and Anderson consider themselves evangelical Christians.

And even among evangelicals themselves, only 21 percent and 11 percent, are aware that these two candidates are evangelicals, whereas 72 percent are aware of Carter's evangelical background.

DEFINITION OF ‘EVANGELICAL’

Evangelicals in the current survey were defined as those with three basic characteristics:

- 1) they describe themselves as “born-again Christians,” or say they have had a “born again” experience;
- 2) they have encouraged other people to believe in Jesus Christ;
- 3) they believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible (or accept the absolute authority of the Bible).

Classifying the evangelical segment on the basis of the survey respondent's claiming to have been born again, a definition which is sometimes used, is too broad. This is only one of the key elements involved, albeit the most important.

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About one-fifth (19 percent) of the total national sample answered in the affirmative to all three questions — approximately 30 million adults (based on the latest U.S. Census data). This proportion closely parallels the percentage found in a major study conducted for the magazine *Christianity Today* — "Evangelical Christianity in the United States."

Following are the key questions asked and the results:

"If the presidential election were being held TODAY, which candidate would you vote for: Carter, the Democrat, Reagan, the Republican, or Anderson, the Independent?"

Those who named another person or who were undecided were asked: "As of today, do you lean more to Carter, the Democrat, to Reagan, the Republican, or to Anderson, the Independent?"

Following are the choices of evangelicals and non-evangelicals, based on registered voters:

	Carter	Reagan	Anderson	Other/Undecided
NATIONAL	39%	33%	13%	10%
Evangelicals	52	31	6	11
Non-evangelicals	36	39	15	10

"Do you happen to know whether or not these men consider themselves to be (born again) evangelical Christians?"

	National	Evangelicals	Non-evangelicals
Carter?			
Yes, he does . . .	51%	72%	47%
No, does not . . .	12	7	13
Don't know . . .	37	21	40
	100%	100%	100%

Reagan?			
Yes, he does . . .	14%	21%	12%
No, does not . . .	26	18	28
Don't Know . . .	60	61	60
	100%	100%	100%

Anderson?			
Yes, he does . . .	11%	11%	11%
No, does not . . .	20	13	22
Don't know . . .	69	76	67
	100%	100%	100%

"Aside from how you feel about a presidential candidate in other respects, would you be more likely to vote for a candidate who considers himself a "born again" evangelical Christian, less likely to

do so, or wouldn't it make any difference either way?

MORE LIKELY — OR LESS LIKELY TO VOTE FOR AN EVANGELICAL?

	More	Less	Makes no difference	No opinion
NATIONAL	19%	9%	66%	6%
Evangelicals	55%	2	38	5
Non-evangelicals	11	11	72	6

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Carter is handling his job as President?"

CARTER POPULARITY

	National	Evangelicals	Non-evangelicals
Approve	32%	46%	29%
Disapprove	55	42	58
No opinion	13	12	13
	100%	100%	100%

Evangelicals not Monolithic in Views

A presidential candidate who seeks to win the support of evangelicals, who account for a solid one-fifth of the electorate, will find that, contrary to the prevailing view, their opinions are similar to those of non-evangelicals on a number of key voter issues.

The latest Gallup survey indicates that evangelicals are by no means monolithic in their views, as indicated by their opinions on nine voter issues.

For example, evangelicals and non-evangelicals have similar attitudes toward gun registration, building more nuclear power plants, the death penalty for murder, and government social programs.

Futhermore, the differences on other key issues are perhaps not so great as might be expected. For example, 66 percent of non-evangelicals favor the ERA, but so does a 53 percent majority of evangelicals. When it comes to increased defense spending, 68 percent of non-evangelicals and 78 percent of evangeli-

cals are in favor of stepping up spending for the military.

In the case of issues related to personal morality and religion, major differences are found between evangelicals and non-evangelicals.

For example, half the proportion of evangelicals as non-evangelicals favor allowing homosexuals to teach in the public schools.

On the focal issue of banning abortions, 29 percent of non-evangelicals express support for such action while 41 percent of evangelicals do so — a pronounced difference, but, again, perhaps less than one might expect.

The sharpest divergence is found in regard to prayer in the schools. Even when the issue is posed in terms of *requiring* prayer (The Supreme Court ruled that public schools may not *sponsor* prayers), the vast majority of evangelicals (81 percent) vote in support while 54 percent of non-evangelicals do so.

VOTER ISSUES

	% Favoring	
	Evangelicals	Non-evangelicals
Issues on which opinion is very close:		
Registration of all firearms	57%	58%
Death penalty for persons convicted of murder . . .	51	53
More nuclear power plants	41	42
Govt. social programs as a way to deal with social problems	54	52
Issues on which opinion is fairly close:		
The ERA	53	66
A ban on all abortions	41	29
Increased spending for defense	78	68
Issues on which opinion differs widely:		
Requiring prayer in public schools	81	54
Allowing homosexuals to teach in public schools .	15	31

British Favor Traditional Worship

PRINCETON, N.J. — In a recent survey conducted for the London School of Economics by the British Gallup Poll, the overwhelming majority of persons who belong to the Church of England (77 percent) say they prefer the traditional Lord's Prayer over a modernized version.

In addition, three in four (73 percent) say they prefer a traditional kind of service for a wedding over a modern language alternative.

Results of further questions reveal the traditional leanings of the Church of England laity. Far more persons, for example, indicate they would be "unhappy" than "happy" if modern language services were used in place of traditional services in the Book of Common Prayer. And persons who favor the traditional authorized version of the Bible outweigh those who prefer a modern language version by the ratio of 2-to-1.

Following are the key questions asked in the survey and the results:

What is your religious denomination?

Church of England	56%
Church of Scotland	7
Free Church, non-conformists	6
Roman Catholic	13
Other	6
None	12

All persons who gave their religious preference as Church of England (56 percent) were then asked the following series of questions (with the results adding to 100 percent):

Do you prefer the traditional Lord's Prayer or a modernised version?

Traditional	77%
Modernised	7
No preference	16

What kind of service do you prefer for a wedding — the traditional or a modern language alternative?

Traditional	73%
Modern	10
No preference	17

How often do you attend a place of worship, apart from marriages, funerals, etc.?

About once a week or more often . . . 8%

Not once a week but at least once a month	11
Not once a month but at least once or twice a year	23
Less often	30
Never	28

The next three questions were asked of churchgoers only (those attending weekly, monthly or at least once or twice a year not counting ceremonies):

Do you personally hope that the traditional Prayer Book services are used?

Always	29%
More often than at present	14
Less often	7
About the same as now	39
Don't know	12

From which version of the Bible do you prefer lessons to be read in church?

Traditional Authorised version	63%
A modern language	27
Other	1
Don't know	10

As you may know, some people want to use language services in place of the traditional services in the Book of common prayer. These new services are known as Series 3. If the new services were adopted (or have already been adopted) by your church would you feel:

Very unhappy	15%
Mildly unhappy	37
Mildly happy	32
Very happy	7
Not sure	11

Those who indicated they were either "very" or "mildly" unhappy were asked:

Which form of service would you prefer for the main act of worship at your church?

The Book of Common Prayer	93%
Series 3	1
Other	1
Not sure	4

The above findings are based on a Gallup survey undertaken in association with sociologist David Martin of the London School of Economics. He comments: "The astonishing thing is that the

bureaucracy of the Church has no idea that these are the sentiments of the man in the pew. This is because your ordinary church member does not like telling the vicar how to do his job."

The British Gallup Poll (Social Surveys, Ltd.) interviewed 2,117 people between April 30 and May 6. Of those, 1,178 or 56 percent qualified themselves as Church of England.

50% OF TEENS ATTENDED CHURCH IN 7-DAY PERIOD

PRINCETON, N.J. — One teenager in every two attended church or synagogue in a seven-day test period, as determined by a just-completed Gallup Youth Survey.

The survey, undertaken in conjunction with the Associated Press, shows 50 percent saying they attended church during the week prior to the interview. This represents a marginal increase over the rate of attendance recorded in a survey in 1977, when 47 percent of teens said they attended religious services during the test week.

The current rate of church attendance among teenagers is higher than that of adults, 18 and older. The latest Gallup Poll audit shows that 41 percent of adults nationwide attended church or synagogue in a typical week of 1979.

Sharp differences among adults are noted by age. Approximately one-third of young adults, 18 to 20, attended church or synagogue weekly in 1979. The proportion drops sharply among adults, 21 to 24, with about one-fourth attending church services in an average week.

A gradual increase then begins as young adults marry and raise families, with the proportion increasing steadily as persons become older, not tapering off until 70 or older. A high proportion of the older members of society continue to attend worship services. In fact, a Gallup study of persons 95 and older showed that as many as one-fourth attend weekly.

'Pot' is Biggest Student Problem

PRINCETON, N.J. — While it is logical to assume that most adults are concerned about the use of marijuana by teen-agers, it may come as a surprise that among teens themselves, nearly four out of every 10 perceive pot smoking by their peers as a "very big" problem in their schools.

Indeed, the latest Gallup Youth Survey found that the number of teens who view marijuana smoking as a very big problem has jumped by 12 percent over a 1978 survey, in which only about one teen in four saw pot smoking in the same light.

In addition, while teens in the 1978 survey put classroom disturbances at the top of a list of eight disciplinary problems, our most recent poll found marijuana smoking replacing such disturbances as the biggest problem of the eight.

Following those two problems in the eyes of teens contacted in our latest poll are, in order, theft, vandalism, drinking, fighting, the use of hard drugs and weapons. Drinking and hard drug use also showed hefty increases in the most recent survey, but both are still seen as major problems by a relatively small number of teens.

In the current poll, student use of marijuana was far more likely to be seen as a very big or fairly big problem by older teens, ages 16 to 18, than by their 13 to 15-year-old counterparts.

Other findings from our recent poll about school problems included:

— Fighting is seen by more girls than boys as a big or fairly big problem. Similarly, younger teens, non-white teens, youths from blue-collar homes, those whose parents did not attend college, and those from the nation's larger cities all were most apt to see fighting as a major problem.

— Vandalism is seen as more of a problem in the East and in suburban areas, and less of a problem in the South.

— Weapons in school are seen by far more non-white teens than whites as a very big or fairly big problem in their schools. It is also seen as a major problem by blue-collar teens, those whose parents were not college-educated, and big-city residents.

— Theft of personal property is seen as a serious problem largely by older teens, non-whites and teens from blue-collar backgrounds.

Classroom disturbances are seen as more of a problem by non-white teens, and by young teens from blue-collar homes.

From another question on our latest

survey, we learned that almost four teens in 10 think discipline at their school is too lenient, while only 31 percent think it is too strict, and 28 percent think discipline is just right.

Indeed, in every teen subgroup except one — teens living in the suburbs — our poll showed that young people who think discipline is too lenient outnumbered those who think it is too strict.

Today's findings are based on telephone interviews with a representative cross-section of over 1,000 teen-agers, ages 13 to 18. The study was sponsored by IDEA, a division of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation.

Highlights of the survey are shown in the tables. (Copyright 1980, The Associated Press.)

HOW BIG A PROBLEM?

	Very	Fairly	Not too	Not at all	Don't know
Marijuana	38%	26%	20%	13%	3%
Classroom disturbances . . .	30	33	26	11	*
Theft	21	30	31	17	1
Vandalism	21	25	35	19	*
Drinking	18	19	30	31	2
Fighting	13	20	40	27	*
Hard Drugs	11	15	35	34	5
Weapons	8	11	25	54	2

* Less than one percent

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

	Too strict	About right	Too lenient	Don't know
NATIONAL	31%	28%	39%	2%
Boys	30	29	39	2
Girls	32	26	39	3
Both sexes:				
13 - 15 years old	32	32	34	2
16 - 18 years old	31	23	44	2

EMERGING TRENDS is published monthly except July and August by the PRINCETON RELIGION RESEARCH CENTER. The Center, founded in 1977, is an inter-faith non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International. The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore ways this information can enable religious leaders to promote spiritual growth. A one year subscription can be obtained for \$20; inquire: Publications Department, P.O. Box 5, Hopewell, N.J. 08525 (Telephone: 609-466-2700). PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGE.